

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Birds by Land and Sea. By JOHN MACLAIR BORASTON.
London: John Lane, 1905.

"HEAVENS! *Another* bird-book!" was the first exclamation which escaped us on unpacking this volume. But a glance at the beautiful illustrations which are copiously distributed throughout its pages soon convinced us that the book had at least one redeeming feature. Later, when we came to play the critic, we discovered that this was a work of real excellence, a perfectly charming series of essays, one for each month of the year.

The author seems to have written out of sheer love of his subject, rather than with a view of writing a book which, perchance, might "sell." His enthusiasm is infectious!

Possessing an unusual facility of expression the author is able to make even the most everyday fact of his subject interesting. Keen insight and power of interpretation are everywhere apparent in these essays, while here and there he is able to show his less fortunate brother naturalists something of the mysteries of the inner life of birds which are but rarely to be encountered. His observations, for example, respecting the migration of the starlings and his notes on their "pairing flights" are new to us.

The author's comments on the evils unfortunately inflicted on our native avifauna by the game-preservation are peculiarly to the point and have our most cordial sympathy. Never has the case been stated more clearly or more forcibly. He also inflicts a well-merited castigation on a certain Field "Naturalists'" (!) Club, whose conduct at Puffin Island ill-agreed with their title to the claim of "Naturalists."

Valuable hints on the methods of one of the most difficult branches of photography—the photography of living birds—are dropped incidentally by the author, and for these many who read this book will be grateful.

Books by what we may call camera-naturalists are legion, but this is one of the very best that has yet appeared.

W. P. PYCRAFT.

Our Country's Animals, and how to know them. By W. J. GORDON.
London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co. (n. d.).

THIS volume is the last of the series which have appeared under the above title. We suppose it will be useful to some people, and, so far as we have examined it, it appears to be fairly accurate; but we would point out that the metapterygoid has nothing to do with the quadrate bone, the astragalus and calcaneum are not metatarsal

bones, the *Microchæridæ* do not belong to the Insectivora but to the Lemurs; *Hyrcotherium* was not Tapir-like, and *Ornithostoma* was not a Crocodile.

We note, as in former volumes, too many instances of loose writing, such as "The land Carnivores can be sorted out on their hind toes"

The long lists of names of fossil species serve to fill out the book, but it is doubtful whether they fulfil any other useful end whatever.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Echinoid Name Discoidea subucula.

By F. A. BATHER, Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.).

A FRIENDLY criticism of the labels attached to specimens of this Cretaceous Echinoid in the Geological Department of the British Museum has caused me to look the matter up. There is nothing very novel in the conclusions to which I have been led; indeed the tangle was almost entirely unravelled by Mr. J. Lambert twelve years ago*. But there are four reasons for reopening the question: first, Mr. Lambert's views appear to have passed unnoticed by British authors, in spite of the 'Zoological Record'; secondly, his conclusions are vitiated in the eyes of most zoologists by his acceptance of the pre-Linnean and unbinominal writer Klein; thirdly, a further erroneous alteration of the nomenclature recently appeared in a book for which I was largely responsible; and, lastly, after lying *perdu* for just a century, another use of the name *Discoidea* claims attention. It may therefore be well to defend the name at the head of this note.

The name *Discoidea* was invented by Klein† for a genus of his section *Fibula*, he saying in explanation:—"Discoidea appellamus mutuato nomine a figura *Disci* veterum (ff) qui cum vase ligneo
" (ff) *Lucerna prægrandis &c. cœnarumque reliquiis discus &c.*, Apul. 2, Miles, p. 125."

tornato convexo-concavo, quo nos reliquias ex mensa reponimus. comparari potest. Tischkorb, Tellerschussel." The sole species mentioned under this name was called by him *Discoidea subuculus*.

Several of Klein's names were legitimized in 1778 by Leske in

* "Recherches sur les Échinides de l'Aptien de Grandpré," Bull. Soc. Géol. France, (3) xx. p. 77 *et seq.*; Nov. 1892. See further, Lambert, "Étude . . . Échinides crétacés dans l'Yonne," Bull. Soc. Sci. Yonne, xlviii. pp. 58, 59; 1894.

† Nat. Disp. Echinodermatum, p. 26; 1734.